



**One Hundred Ninth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20515**

September 2, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Hurricane Katrina has devastated parts of Mississippi. Some areas of my home state have been completely destroyed. Yet other communities in Mississippi are now sheltering thousands of evacuees fleeing towns like Gulfport and Biloxi.

Today, an emergency declaration was announced for Texas and Arkansas, making every county in both of these states eligible for disaster aid. Given the substantial aid these states are providing to evacuees, this declaration is certainly appropriate. I am very concerned, however, that only fifty-two counties are included in the disaster declaration for Mississippi, leaving nearly one-third of my home state off the emergency declaration. This omission affects the ability of a number of counties in my congressional district to obtain disaster assistance.

From what I see here on the ground, the entire state of Mississippi should be declared a disaster area because the counties to the north are absorbing the evacuees and dealing with the costs associated with the disaster farther south. If Mississippi is to recover as quickly as possible, it is important that every county be eligible for disaster assistance. Therefore, I ask you to expand your original disaster declaration for Mississippi to include every single county.

I would appreciate your assistance in this critical matter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

  
Bennie G. Thompson  
Ranking Member